

Monday, February 13, 2006

Subject: FCC Notice of Public Rulemaking on "Video Franchising" (05-311)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a local producer at Hollywood Comcast Cable and Chatsworth Time-Warner Cable in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and am writing to express my extreme opposition to any proposals that would do away with local video franchise agreements between local municipalities and video providers.

These agreements are the only way cable companies doing business in the community can be held accountable to that local community, and they're also the only mechanism that can ensure the existence of local Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access TV channels and centers. In communities that have no local government coverage other than what PEG provides, citizens' opportunities to stay informed about local government issues would be severely reduced.

Also, local public access centers are the only places that provide nonprofit organizations training and production facilities to affordably produce their own programming, making it possible for them to share their information through the media. Often this programming serves segments of the community completely neglected by the commercial media, such as seniors, the disabled, ethnic communities, and young people.

Finally, I believe it is critical for our democracy to reverse the trend toward more and more centralized, homogenized media -- the widest possible range of ideas and opinions needs to be circulated so that people will have the information they need to make informed decisions.

Thank you,

Cher Gilmore
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